

Filed for intro on 01/30/2002

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 659
By Kisber

A RESOLUTION to continue the special joint committee to study electric utility industry deregulation.

WHEREAS, the joint committee on electric utility deregulation was created by the One Hundredth General Assembly pursuant to Section 13, Chapter 531 of the Public Acts of 1997; and

WHEREAS, the study was undertaken in response to a national debate on electric utility deregulation leading to retail competition of electric power and the action of several states to move toward electric utility deregulation and retail competition; and

WHEREAS, electricity is a necessity for individuals, businesses, industries, municipalities and counties in this state; and

WHEREAS, the potential impact of electric power deregulation upon the citizens, businesses, industries and state and local governments of Tennessee is not yet fully understood; and

WHEREAS, congressional action may lead to radical changes in the Tennessee Valley Authority, which could profoundly affect the relationship between TVA on the one hand, and

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municipal electric companies, electric cooperatives, and Tennessee state and local governments on the other hand; and

WHEREAS, if TVA's status as a supplier of power is changed and its contractual arrangements with municipal and cooperative distributors is changed, and in-lieu-of-tax payments are then terminated, the state of Tennessee may be required to implement a statewide regulatory mechanism to protect consumers of electricity in areas not readily subject to regulation by market forces and to enact tax measures to recover revenue lost from in-lieu-of-tax payments; and

WHEREAS, inasmuch as potential changes in the status of TVA could have implications in the area of economic development, as well as state and local revenues, the progress of Congressional debate on that subject is of profound significance to the Executive Branch, as well as to this General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of this General Assembly to see, to the best of its ability, that the citizens of this state, who are currently the beneficiaries of low electric rates, suffer no harm as to rates, environmental conditions, energy conservation programs, system reliability, universal service and low income assistance programs as a result of deregulation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That the special joint committee to study Electric Utility Industry Deregulation, created pursuant to Section 13, Chapter 531 of the Public Acts of 1997 and continued by House Joint Resolution No. 87 of the One Hundred First General Assembly, be continued until February 28, 2004.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the membership of the committee as constituted in Section 13(c) of Chapter 531 of 1997 and as augmented by action of the speakers of the Senate and the House of Representatives pursuant to Chapter 836 of the Public Acts of 1998

shall remain as it presently exists, with five (5) members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House and five (5) members of the Senate, appointed by the Speaker of the Senate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That in its deliberations, the special joint committee shall study and examine those issues set out in Section 13(d) of Chapter 531 of the Public Acts of 1997, as well as such other pertinent issues that may arise.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Governor is urged to designate a person to act as a focal point for the Executive Branch concerning matters relating to electric utility industry deregulation to confer with the special joint committee on deregulation issues and to participate in presenting a unified voice for the state of Tennessee in the national debate on electric utility industry deregulation, particularly as it relates to the future of TVA.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation or interim reports, to the One Hundred Third General Assembly no later than February 28, 2004, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Honorable Don Sundquist, Governor of the State of Tennessee.